

Wisconsin Privacy Laws

Government Records Privacy

Wisconsin public records law; Wis. Stat. §§ 19.21 and following.

The Wisconsin Public Records Law generally opens state and local government records to public inspection, unless there is a specific law that denies public access. The Wisconsin Public Records Law specifically denies access to information that identifies applicants for public positions and law enforcement informers, and denies access to a public employee's personnel records that contain personally identifiable information.

The Wisconsin Public Records Law also requires state and local authorities to do the following:

- Notify a public employee before releasing any records that contain information relating to discipline-type actions involving the employee.
- Notify a non-public employee whose personally-identifiable information is on a record provided by his or her employer before releasing the record.
- Notify an individual whose personally-identifiable information is on a record obtained by subpoena or search warrant before releasing the record.

Department of Natural Resources - nondisclosure of personal information; Wis. Stat. § 23.45.

Registration forms used by the Wisconsin department of natural resources shall include an option for an individual who is required to put personal information on the form to declare that the personal information should not be released to the public.

The personal information subject to this law includes name, social security number, telephone number, street address, post office box number, and 9-digit extended zip code.

Employee Trust Fund - public records; Wis. Stat. § 40.07.

An individual's personal information maintained in the records of the public employee trust fund is not a public record and shall not be disclosed unless the information is:

- Requested by the person whose record contains the information.
- Requested by a public employee for use in the discharge of the employee's duties.
- Required to be disclosed by a court order.

- Required to be disclosed for the proper administration of the duties of the public employee trust fund.

Disclosure of information from vital records; Wis. Stat. § 69.20.

Certificates of birth, death, and divorce or annulment, marriage documents, and records containing information taken from those records or documents, are confidential and may only be released to the registrant, the registrant's immediate family or legal representative, or in certain situations to state government officials for the purpose of compiling health statistics.

Department of Transportation - disclosure of personal identifiers; Wis. Stat. § 85.103.

A person who applies to the Wisconsin department of transportation for an auto registration, certificate of title, drivers license, or identification card, may request that the department maintain the confidentiality of information contained in those records that contain the person's name, social security number, telephone number, street address, post-office box number, or 9-digit extended zip code, except in certain limited situations.

Department of Regulation and Licensing; nondisclosure of certain personal information; Wis. Stat. § 440.14.

The Wisconsin department of regulation and licensing, or any of its credentialing boards, may not release lists that contain personal identifiers of 10 or more individuals unless the department first gives the individual an opportunity to refuse to have his or her name included in the release.

Under this law, a "personal identifier" means a name, social security number, telephone number, street address, post-office box number, or zip code.

If an individual refuses to allow his or her information to be included in the list, the department may not include the individual's name on a list unless it provides the list to another state agency, a law enforcement agency, or an agency of the federal government.